^MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER 305

of the police, has not supplied the most probable explanation of that dark affair."

In a letter addressed to M. Oharpentier in August, 1889, while he was writing "La Bete Humaine," at Me*dan, Zola said:

"I am working on my novel passionately shall certainly have finished it by December 1. ... I Fasquelle¹ hope take to the first seven chapters on September 15, order that they may be immediately set in type. ... I have a desperate desire finish my Eougon-Macquart series as soon possible. I should like to be rid of it in January, '92. This but managed, be shall have to work very hard, I am fortunately in a good condition for work, I enjoy the most perfect and feel again as I did when I was twenty.² . . . We shall Paris return to September 10, and settle quietly in our quarters.³ new That will take us quite six weeks, and we should like be settled to before the cold weather comes. There is a great deal to be but wo shall do it leisurely, even if we have postpone furnishing the place completely until later. In December we shall return to Mddan to kill the pig, and, if it suits vou shall you, come with us.⁴ The weather here is Ι horrible. hope you will have some sunshine as you havo gone the Eivieral vonder Ito in search of it. ... Ah I my friend if I only thirty, should see what I would do 1 I would stagger the world!"

It was in the spring of 1890 that "La Bete Humaine" appeared in volume form; and to some

readers might it seem that Zola showed great boldness in coming forward

- ¹ M. Eugene Fasquelle had now acquired an interest in M. Charpentier'a
- publishing business, which he ultimately purchased.

 ² This was the result of having rid himself of his obesity.

 ⁸ The allusion is to the house in the Rue do Bruxelles (21 Us), which
- Zola made his Paris homo until his death.
- 4 In his later years Zola kept Christmas and ITew Year's M6dan, at and then usually had a house-party there.